

Of the County Council's action in suspending Public School Inspector Bruels at its meeting last week there is perhaps among the public generally more criticism than praise, and a feeling that Mr Bruels was hardly fairly treated. It is the belief of many that the Inspector is to a very great extent the victim of Ontario's odious Education Act—which scarcely allows the trustees permission to buy brooms for the schools without direction from the central authority in Toronto—and that in the enforcement of the Act he carried it out to the last letter without endeavoring to give it any elasticity which would adapt it better to some of the peculiar conditions which prevail in this county. He has had, too, perhaps, the faculty of carrying out some of its unpleasant duties in unpleasant ways, and thus incurring the displeasure of some of the teachers, many of the trustees and the municipal authorities generally. That among most of the Reeves of North Renfrew there is strong feeling against him was plainly evident from the proceedings at Council last week, there being only one of them—Mr Connelly, of Cobden—to speak a word in his defence. The imputation of disloyalty most people will dismiss at once as being unworthy of consideration. The charges made against him in regard to his administrative duties he claims cannot be sustained and he says that in every case referred to he has the authority of the Education Act and of the Minister of Education behind him. True, Mr Bruels appeared twice before the Council; the first time to submit to a running fire of complaints and questions from the members without previous knowledge of their nature or an opportunity to prepare himself for the ordeal; and the second time, apparently, to tell the members of Council—and two or three of them in particular—what he thought of their actions. It is not surprising that he was not able in either case to acquit himself very creditably, and undoubtedly it would have been the wiser course to have demanded that the charges be made in writing before appearing to answer them. The complaining members of Council declared their willingness to stand behind the charges made, but it is open to grave doubt whether the Education Department will take the same view of matters as they do, and whether the charges will have the same significance when the evidence is submitted. The suspension of Mr Bruels renders it practically out of the question for him to give satisfactory service in the event of his

being sustained by the Department, and will also put a serious impediment in his way for the future. The Observer feels that some more moderate means might have been found for dealing with the case at this juncture and that it might have been taken up with the Department without attaching to it the odium of suspension. Then, if sufficient grounds were established, further action might follow. There aren't many R. G. Scotts as school inspectors. The late Inspector was to a great extent a law unto himself and he cared little for the John Seath monarchy in the Parliament Buildings in Toronto. Mr Scott adapted the law to suit conditions in his Inspectorate and refused to bow to the rule of absolutism from Queen's Park. He retained to the last the confidence and respect of all those whom he served and by his firm stand earned the admiration of thousands throughout the Province who had never heard of him until he thundered forth his denunciation of the edicts issuing from the Kaiser of the Education Department. Mr Bruels has, it would seem, been doing the will of that Department—hewing to the Act without caring where the chips might fall—and in doing so has unquestionably sacrificed the good-will of many who would have admired some of R. G. Scott's qualities in him. If this version be correct the Department which he has faithfully upheld will hardly dismiss him and an unpleasant deadlock is more than likely to develop out of the present situation.